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ABSTRACT

As communication is a moral action involving personal choice, composition instructors must help promote their students' character development. Whether during audience analysis, invention, or disposition, composition always involves the development and testing of four virtues: honesty, courage, love, and a combination of hope and humility. Teachers can encourage their students' honesty by assigning manageable topics that emphasize informed opinion over succesful argumentation and by stressing the need for concern over the reality created by writing. Teachers can promote courage by having students conduct primary research on topics that threaten their image of the world, by emphasizing that writing is a deed that needs to be witnessed, and by stressing that the students must decide whether to impress audiences with their writing style. Teachers need to understand that by establishing communion with the self and by communicating something beneficial and significant to readers, student writing can develop self-love and love of others. Finally, teachers can encourage students' humility as well as hope by helping them see that knowing and communicating are both difficult and valuable activities. (MM)

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Character and the Composing Process

by Thomas M. Rivers

"Non Posse Oratorem Esse Nisi Virum Bonum"
(You are not an orator unless a good man)

The 1983 College Composition and Communication Conference, "The Writer's World(s): Achieving Insight and Impact", contained the following thematic statement: "Perhaps the real test of writing competency is not so much how 'correct' the writing as how clear its thoughts, how sound its concepts, and how effectively it advances the best potentialities of persons towards a humane society." This essay will explore how the composing process can "advance the best potentialities of persons toward a humane society" and in particular will take as its starting point the position that teachers of all subjects, but particularly composition teachers, must work for the development of character in their students.

I believe that composition teachers are in a unique position to do this because the act of communicating, of establishing communion, is in itself an action of moral dimension. It involves more than technique because of the role communicating can play in the developing and promoting of character. This view of communicating (I include of course both speech and writing)

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has a long tradition. As S. Michael Halloran states: "Implicit in the Greek and Roman conception of rhetoric is a theory of rhetorical pedagogy, as a form of moral education or character development. If Ethos is manifested in rhetorical action, and if Ethos is formed by choosing ethical modes of action, it follows that educating a person in rhetorical action, schooling him in proper rhetorical habits, is a means of forming his character."[1]

For Aristotle one became good by doing good acts, by developing the habit of doing good acts. The very nature of rhetoric as one sees in Cicero's essay "On Moral Duties" leads to action and is itself a kind of action. Rhetoric is higher than philosophical reasoning because "rhetoric is, first of all, a humane discipline grounded in choice and designed primarily to persuade." It is through rhetoric that one is capable of changing reality.[2]

Besides the ethical dimension implicit in rhetoric because it involves choice and action, it is also through language that one establishes communion with others, and it is "other" that gives an ethical imperative to our actions, whether it is Kant's Categorical Imperative or Christ's "Do unto other..."--all moral precepts begin with and exist because of others.

A final defense for promoting writing and speaking as uniquely qualified for developing character stems from language's special role in establishing our very humanity. Susanne Langer wrote: "Not higher sensitivity, not longer memory or even quicker association sets man so far above other animals that he

can regard them as denizens of a lower world: no, it is the power of using symbols-- the power of speech--that makes him lord of the earth."[3]

I use the word "character" in my presentation instead of "ethos" (the traditional word used in reference to a speaker or writer's character) to suggest a much wider framework for addressing the ethical issues raised in and by the composing and communicating act. Ethos traditionally is viewed as an audience concern while in this paper I will explore the issue of character in not only the audience sense, but also in the invention aspect and the disposition aspect--the last term refers to the actual putting of our words on paper, a concern with formal matters (style, organization, editing). I am aware that the composing process is not best or exhaustively described by referring to its parts, which implies a system instead of a process, but the categories are a useful way of exploring and presenting my concerns with character.

The aim of this exploration is to reassert the primacy of character development in education, to develop a framework for showing how character issues are involved in all of the composing process, and to suggest coincidentally some pedagogical "do's" and "don'ts", or at least to suggest that if character development is of primary value, then classroom strategies will be more fruitful if both teachers and students have explicit insight into these matters.

My method for exploring the relationship between character development and composition, besides using the above categories

of Invention, Audience, and Disposition, is to stipulate a canon, a writer's canon, a code of conduct, that is always at stake, being developed and tested, in the composing process. This canon consists of four virtues or habits. To possess these virtues is, as the word habit suggests, not a matter of knowing something, but of doing something. The act of composing becomes potentially an act which can develop the vir bonum. These virtues or habits are: honesty, courage, love, and "humbition". The last term is borrowed from the philosopher Walter Kaufmann whose book Without Guilt and Justice: From Deceidephobia to Autonomy informs the larger context of this paper. "Humbition" is a coined term involving humility and ambition.[4] I will also use the word and virtue of hope interchangeably with ambition. Otis Walter has rightly pointed out the need for students of rhetoric to attend to the role of hope in studying discourse, and I would argue for the need in discussing the relationship between character development and composition.[5]

I might add that the absence of character is also revealed in the composing process. The objective, however, of promoting character through rhetoric involves more than getting writers to avoid the opposite of the writer's canon. One is not a virtuous writer or a writer of character if one does not lie, if one is not cowardly, if one is not manipulative or proud. The goal is the promotion of virtue, not the elimination of "character flaws". I make a distinction, in other words, between acting morally, not acting immorally, and acting immorally. To jump on a grenade to save one's comrades is to act morally, not to jump

on the grenade is not immoral, and to fail to warn your comrades when one might clearly be in a position to do so would be to act immorally. The distinction between being a virtuous writer, a vir bonum, and not being an unvirtuous writer is a fuzzy one, but it does suggest that the ideal is to strive to be beyond the point where virtue is more than necessity, and is more than the absence of flaws.

Invention

Honesty

As the writer faces the blank page, or better still as she looks at the assignment, she by necessity, if she is eventually concerned with communicating an approximation of truth, needs honesty--intellectual honesty. This applies to all kinds of writing--from how-to articles on building a bird house, to feasibility studies, letters of application, or to the traditional reflective essay or persuasion paper. Walter Kaumann writes: "high standards of honesty mean that one has a conscience about what one says and what one believes. They mean that one takes some trouble to determine what speaks for and against a view, what the alternatives are, what speaks for and against each, and what alternatives are preferable on these grounds".[6] Honesty then is the virtue that addresses the imperatives of inquiry. The journey to conviction and an approximation of truth as best as one can know it requires intellectual honesty.

If we are going to promote intellectual honesty in the invention stage, then our students need assignments that promote this. Augustus Kolich, in a recent College English article,

makes a fine argument about how the typical research paper in a Freshman Composition course, besides not promoting honesty, actually promotes dishonesty, and this dishonesty applies not only to the plagiarist, but to the non-plagiarist as well. The non-plagiarist avoids the charge of dishonesty more on technical grounds than on ethical grounds. The non-plagiarist often does not even come close to (nor do we expect him to) original research or an original synthesis, yet their cut-and-paste papers, if they follow the rules for documentation (certainly not the same as following the imperatives of honest inquiry), are ruled acceptable.[7]

Likewise, we do not promote intellectual honesty if we avoid the problems of the so called "research" paper by replacing it with what Jack P. Rawlins calls the "in my opinion" paper.[8] Though many of us see the audience value of using the provisional language of "in my opinion" (later I will show how this can be a kind of audience honesty and audience humility), it is also possible that in the invention stage such phrasing supposes an epistomology that is excessively subjective--phrasing that confuses a constitutional right to express an opinion with the ethical imperatives of honest inquiry. Certainly it is better to give our students topics that belong to the realm of the "probable", which is, as Aristotle tells us, the domain of rhetoric, than give them unrealistic research topics that turn inquiry into exercises in documentation. But it is also risky when you move students into the realm of "mere opinion". You risk your students confusing sincerity with honesty, rhetoric

with mere opinion. As James Raymond has pointed out, the fact that rhetoric deals with the least amount of certainty does not mean that it is without rules of inquiry that one must honestly follow--a rhetorician is required to use the evidence of science if available, as well as the methods and evidence of rhetoric.[9]

What kinds of assignments promote intellectual honesty? I think that rooting topics in problematic situations that are personally related to our students is a good place--I think the work of Linda Flower, and much that I would gather under the Young, Becker, Pike school, seems valuable in promoting the development of character and the virtue of honest inquiry. Furthermore, I think the implicit advice in Professor Edward P.J. Corbett's piece in Rhetoric Review on the value of John Locke to composition teachers is valuable in promoting honesty--our students are experience starved.[10] We cannot expect them to "know", in John Locke's sense, or in anyone's sense for that matter, if they are only taught composition when they are academically and personally inexperienced. The recent shift from a composition course the freshman year and a second one or third one in thejunior and senior year is one way to make the issue of honesty in the invention stage a prominent one--otherwise teachers are often forced to turn writing classes into the clothing of ideas already formed in the student's mind. In any case, we need to set up assignments that either use the students own lives as subject matter, or set up situations, especially if we are having them write a lot in a short amount of time, in which the inquiry stage is manageable and the data they are

responding to is controlled.

Allan Bloom, in a National Review article, writes that the premise of many people regarding truth is "that the truth itself must be a prejudice or at least treated as such."[11] Though I understand the irresponsible brand of relativism he is reacting against, I think in one sense that it is important to view searching for the truth as a prejudice. The search for the truth does involve a link between the knower and the known--one cannot separate the knower from the known. Paradoxically, this suggests that to achieve what we ordinarily mean by "objectivity" we need more of self, not less--more of an intellectually honest self. An honest inquirer is one who arms herself with a vision. This arming could consist of the methodology of a discipline, the mastering of heuristic strategies which by definition promote the idea that to know is to master perspective and point of view. A conception is something we see with, and all knowing requires active "seeing" on the part of any inquirer. A preconception, on the other hand, is an unearned, unwarranted, and a potentially dishonest conception. Having knowledge (which is not the same as having "the truth"), getting knowledge is a complicated business. I might add that because inquiry is often such hardwork I stress to my students the need for a ritual that promotes discipline. To strive for honesty but to be weak in the flesh is itself dishonest. Too often the student who says he went to the library and couldn't find anything was overtired, or suffering from low blood sugar, or was "squeezing" in a few minutes from an overloaded schedule aimed at getting the greatest

number of hours in a semester.

Of course Mr. Bloom has a point about treating truth as prejudice. Our students need to distinguish between, to paraphrase St. Theresa of Avilla, the road to heaven and heaven. The road to truth and certainty, what is involved in the act of knowing, is not the same as truth and certainty. It is precisely this difference between attempts at knowing the truth and <u>having</u> the truth that makes our actions based on our knowledge so fraught with ethical implications. In any case, to argue that knowing involves "prejudice" is not to say that truth does not exist. A close play at home plate in a baseball game may make it difficult to know whether the runner was safe or out--the camera angle may not show depth, the umpire may not have been standing (a "prejudice") in the ideal position, and the players involved are unlikely to call the play with the proper "prejudice"; nevertheless, it would be wrong to argue that there is no <u>truth</u> here. A combination of all points of view or "prejudices", or a judicious selection of the most appropriate point of view will help one in honestly ascertaining whether they have legitimate knowledge, but certainly no guarantee of the truth.

A final note. The main goal is to promote honesty in the invention stage. I find it useful to reinforce this goal by keeping a file of examples of writers who were deliberately dishonest--from fudged research data, supposedly to get grants and dwindleing federal dollars, to false news stories submitted for Pulitzer prizes. These are obvious examples. The subtle ones, the ones that involve loaded questions (one of my

favorites was a question asked of the participants in the Fastnet sailboat race in which a number of participants were killed in a vicious storm. Some participants favored a more lax policy on the use of more sophisticated navigational aids. Following is the question prepared by the racing committee charged with polling the participants, but already on record against any rule change: "with hindsight would you support a change of RORC policy to allow the use of hyperbolic fixing equipment and other sophisticated navigational aids (remember that all sophisticated equipment is a drain on yacht's batteries?)", or reports on human sexuality that are generated by and reproduced in Cosmopolitan that do not even come close to meeting even the "softer" standards of scientific investigation in the social sciences, or the many studies showing the "benefits" of smoking that come out of America's "tobacco schools" and Japan (it is to the Japanese government's benefit to promote smoking's benefits given the revenues generated by taxing this habit).

Courage

The virtue of courage is of primary concern when I discuss Audience, but there is a special way it applies to Invention. In a writer's attempt to be solicitous about the matter of which he writes, he often becomes aware that writing is not an "armchair" adventure. In the attempt to honestly answer questions that he may have generated about a problem, he will often encounter some difficulties. He may not have his life threatened as reporters covering the Middle East or Organized Crime have been threatened, but he needs to know that it happens and that it takes courage to

resist. To further promote the virtue I give them assignments that require more than secondary research--assignments that require interviewing or distributing questionnaires. A student investigating cheating in her school or class runs certain risks, as does the student investigating and writing about homosexuality on campus. Even interviewing someone may be embarrassing and may require a certain amount of courage. In any case, it should be clear that if one decides to use composition courses as a way of promoting the "writer's canon" then assignments must encourage some difficult investigative tasks (this assumes the need for topics that require investigation).

The Invention stage also promotes another kind of courage--the courage to risk change. A writer serious about exploring a subject honestly risks being changed by this. Anything that risks a shattering or even an addition to one's "image" of the world (Kenneth Boulding's term) requires courage. Pedagogically, this suggests that assignments arrived at promoting character, and especially courage, besides requiring more than secondary research, should also be topics that promote disequilibrium, that threaten our students' image of the world. Even to "lie down" with a new concept risks a "conception", an unwanted one--it takes courage not to play it safe.

Love

An involvement with Invention involves and promotes the virtue of self-love. If we value our humanity we ought to love ourselves as we may or ought to love our neighbors. As teachers we should not assume that because our students want to "get

ahead" that this means they love their selves. To love something is to prize it, to cherish it, to appreciate it; there is ample evidence that our students do not. Herman Melville wrote: "From without, no wonderful effect is wrought within ourselves unless some interior responding wonder meets it." This "interior responding wonder" is the self. The apparent selfishness of the "me" generation masks the very real need of young people to feel unique and special.

Language is the major way we come to know our uniqueness and, as Helen Keller so eloquently testified in her discovery of language, a way we come to restore our humanity--our love of self. She wrote: "That living word [water] awakened my soul, gave it light, hope, joy, set it free."[12] We write first and foremost for ourself. We are, as Donald Murray writes, the first reader. There is a self that writes and another self that reads. Besides promoting thinking this other self does more. Murray writes: "the other self also is the supportive colleague to the writer, the chap who commiserates and encourages, listens sympathetically to the writer's complaints and reminds the writer of past success. The deeper we get into the writing process the more we may discover how affective concerns govern the cognitive...".[13] A concern with love in the Audience section of this paper is the most obvious application of the virtue of love. But writing first establishes communion with ourselves, and such acts of communion promote, because they require it, the virtue of love.

Humility

Invention promotes the virtue of humility. The more intellectually honest a writer becomes through honest inquiry the more problematic will the act of knowing appear to be. If a student learns that the knower and the known cannot be separated, that language creates thought, and that thought creates language, and that language creates reality, and reality creates language, they ought to be humbled. When Adam and Eve ate of the fruit of the forbidden tree of knowledge they bit off more than they could chew--their sin of pride must be amended with the virtue of humility.

Ambition and Hope

This humility, however, should not turn into paralysis. The vir bonum is one who can act without certainty, without absolute answers, without truth pinned and wriggling like a captured bug. Herman Melville wrote that the "truth uncompromisingly told must have its ragged edges" and so too the truth uncompromisingly sought. The real test of our freedom, our free will, is to be able to act without guarantees that our actions are absolutely correct, that our "knowledge" is the same as truth. The act of exploring and investigating requires and promotes the hope that the enterprise is not a solipcistic one--that the "going around" (from ambire--to get votes and the root of the word ambition) is not without meaning. It is important that we not believe as Voltaire wrote, that "people use thought only to justify their wrongdoings, and speech only to conceal their thoughts".

Audience

The word ethos is the traditional term used in referrring to the speaker or writer's character as it appears to and influences an audience. There is little doubt that the reputation of a writer or speaker prior to their communicating, or revealed during the act of communicating, greatly influences how an audience interprets and finally synthesizes a message. In a very real sense a writer's words are never separate from the writer. More is involved than a message that passes to the reader--an impression about the writer and her character is also conveyed.

Thoreau wrote: "It is the man determines what is said, not the words. If a mean person uses a wise maxim I bethink me how it can be interpreted so as to commend itself to his meanness; but if a wise man makes a commonplace remark I consider what wider construction it will admit." For the Romans the way to appear to have character was to have character--to be vir bonum--and you achieved this by habitually doing virtuous acts, and it was the "doing" of rhetoric that helped promote these virtues. Today, "impression management" is of concern. Nevertheless, making a good impression is important, and learning how to make one is not a sign of no substance. Furthermore, though some of the people can be fooled some of the time, there is evidence that no amount of "pure" impression management will disguise a character of meanness--a writer or speaker without the canon.

Honesty

Honesty should not be confused with sincerity, though sincerity is certainly preferable to insincerity. But too often

sincerity is mouthing falsehoods with conviction, which is to also say that the speaker or writer did not follow the imperatives of inquiry in the invention stage. This honesty, furthermore, is not merely frankness. Walter Kaufmann writes: "One tells people what one thinks of them and assumes that extreme rudeness is proof of moral superiority."[14] Confusing honesty with sincerity and frankness are popular misconceptions because they place honesty within reach of all of us.

Margaret B. McDowell, in an essay entitled "Honesty in Freshman Rhetoric", mentions that we oftentimes promote a dishonest relationship between writer and reader when we give assignments that require of freshmen to master "skillful expression," instead of presenting informed opinions.[15] The relationship between writer and imagined, simulated, or real audience is a dishonest one from the start--in this instance the writer really doesn't have an informed opinion and really doesn't wish to communicate--writing becomes rationalizing and skillful expression only.

George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, in their book Metaphors We Live By, note how even the language that underlies argumentation is itself metaphorical--a war metaphor.[16] To think in terms of "setting up a defense", of "destroying" your opponents argument in a Pro/Con/Pro sandwich, or of finding "ammunition" hints of a less than honest approach to establishing communion or caring for your audience (the virtue of love). If we wish to promote character, especially honesty in regards to audience, then as teachers we have to be careful that we not set up pedagogical

strategies that work against us. This is often difficult, since, as Lakoff and Johnson point out, these are metaphors we live by--not ones we necessarily think of critically.

Courage

To communicate our convictions arrived at honestly and investigated courageously, by the act of speaking or writing, requires courage. Words are deeds. If words are not viewed as deeds, but only as "mere words" then one is never accountable for what is said, and of course what is mis-said, or said and not done. Politicians who ask us to judge them by their deeds and not their words imply that words are not deeds, and to some extent condition voters to ignore the ethical dimension of mere words--these non-acts. Common sense, of course, tells us that words are indeed, deeds. And like all deeds they are potentially a source for promoting courage. The printed word (not to be confused with the courage of investigating) can still get you shot or imprisoned, and though my students will not face this, yet, in my classes, I do incorporate into my assignments the posssibility of public viewing (particularly the school newspaper). They risk ridicule and embarrassment from what they have written and this promotes courage. The key pedagogy here is viewing writing as a deed, and having the deed witnessed (school newspaper, local newspapers, taped to school hallways, copies to classmates, etc.).

I keep a file of noteworthy examples of courage. A most noteworthy example or model is the courage of Thomas More. To be courageous is not to be outrageous, reckless, or foolhardy.

Courage, like honesty, has a number of false faces and it is important to show the student that courage is hard to come by. The most courageous thing to do may be to say nothing -like More, the courage may be in silence. Aristotle writes in his Nicomachean Ethics: "Anyone can get angry--that is easy--... but to do this to the right person, to the right extent, at the right time, with the right motive, and in the right way, that is not for everyone, nor is it easy; wherefore goodness is both rare and laudable and noble."[17]

Love

Love is probably the key virtue in a concern with audience (as honesty was the key virtue in the invention or inquiry stage of the process). To communicate with the goal of assisting or benefiting your audience in some way (as opposed to the goal of getting your own way) is to act lovingly. This is not a sentimentalized version of love, but involves the cultivation of a social conscience. Love, as Walter Kaufmann points out, may not be required by rationality, but it is desirable. We know how indebted we are to those who show concern for others, in particular in the care executed in communicating with someone--all the way to caring that what is communicated is useful and somewhat true, to concern with the ease with which one's reader follows what is written (I would even include indebtedness to those people who write directions with care for putting a child's toy together. For the most part I have abandoned the-night-before-Christmas scene in front of the fireplace with wine glass at hand and the child's toy spread out before me, cursing, not only the uncaring

person who wrote the directions, but also Santa and the infant Jesus' birth).

In the cultivation of love our students should also realize how complex being virtuous can be. Love, may, for example, conflict with honesty. So be it. Was the "whiskey priest" in Graham Green's The Power and the Glory unvirtuous for carrying out his priestly duties even though he had no faith himself? There is no denying that he was lying in some way to the believers he ministered to, but in this instance his concern for their well-being overrode the demands of honesty. There is no guarantee that the virtues of the canon will not compete with each other (for Kaufmann honesty is the central virtue which should in most instances take precedent). Cultivation of and possession of these virtues of the canon will not necessarily make one's life easier, nor will it make the decisions that accompany writing and speaking any easier. The implications for our teaching is that we demonstrate for our students (and which will be demonstrated in their own writing and speaking) that writing, for example, a letter of recommendation for someone, that is honest may hurt someone (it would be interesting to apply this canon to that whole genre of letters-of-recommendation that accompany applications for teaching jobs).

Inherent in the virtue of love as the informing virtue for a concern with audience and with a concern with establishing "communion" is the belief that manipulation of one's audience is wrong, not only if the manipulation is for the writer or speaker's benefit, but also if it is for the audience's "own

good". Manipulation strategies based on images of man that see him as irrational and unfree run the risk of becoming self fulfilling. As mentioned earlier, words are deeds and they are capable of all kinds of influence. There are, of course, times when a situation may demand a lie, when love takes precedent over honesty--whether it's to protect our loved ones or a nation there are certainly times when "security" justifies a falsehood. Nevertheless, rhetoric should never be dismissed as "mere rhetoric"; our words can and do come back to haunt us. T.S. Eliot's Thomas à Becket said that "the greatest treason is to do the right thing for the wrong reason." It is often these wrong reasons, these "Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori" type reasons that come back to haunt a nation. Whether it is to get votes or to do the right thing to help a nation, the short-sightedness of trying to manipulate people with "mere rhetoric", with sophistry, with lies runs the risk of destroying trust in words and eventually in our leaders. The truth uncompromisingly told must indeed have its ragged edges, and a failure of our nation's leaders to recognize this and instead to speak a rhetoric of absolute certainty is finally not an act of love, no matter how pure the motive.

Humility

If humility in the invention stage is related to the lack of certainty that accompanies inquiry in the realm of the probable, humility in the audience stage is related to the probability that a writer or speaker will not establish propinquity or communion with her audience, that her audience will not change or heed her

caring words. The reader or listener may see her as dishonest, cowardly, manipulative, or proud (when she is not, or when she is, but doesn't know it). The audience may be dishonest and wouldn't know the real thing anyway. Her timing may be wrong, she may be a prophet in her own land and be suffering their usual fate. The Tower of Babel is a mighty one, and to establish communion once aware of the larger "universe of discourse" is difficult and humbling. The pen is not always mightier than the sword and there is a point to Stalin's query about how many divisions the Pope had.

It may be intellectually dishonest to promote, as I mentioned earlier, or to assign the "in-my-opinion" paper, but assuming its limitations are understood, the provisional nature of "my opinion" is a fair enough statement (by an informed and honest inquirer) and a fair enough recognition of the personal nature of knowledge that separates (as much as binds) humans from one another. Humility can lead to tolerance, and a willingness to listen to other voices and other opinions. I often tell my students that another facet of humility is not so much the humbling affect of pink slips and rejections, but the humbling affect of someone accepting their piece for the wrong reason (as I write this essay I worry about a reactionary reader agreeing with this essay for the wrong reasons), or of someone accepting a piece that isn't all that good, or getting something accepted that will be misunderstood by readers, or that will be understood, acted upon, and which later will be found to have been wrong advice (I tell, or better still have them find out on

their own, that this doesn't have to be the David Stockman type education either; it can be a feasibility study that costs a company millions).

Ambition or Hope

In spite of the difficulty in establishing communion, writers still assault the Tower of Babel. Though many think that "talk is cheap", and though silence is easy in most cases, and though many TV and film heroes are the strong and silent type, many people still strive to communicate. And not just to "express themselves" (this may require self-love, however); but to communicate. This often requires the writer or speaker to give up that which prevents communion--pride, fear, hate or anger. This involves more than using strategies for "bridge building". Elimination of jargon, for example, involves more than replacing it with clearer language. Jargon is often the language of ego--a prideful language that separates outsiders from insiders. The chemist who finally tells the plumber "don't use hydrochloric acid to clean out sewer pipes, it eats hell out of the pipes" is doing more than writing clearer than "the efficacy of hydrochloric acid is indisputable, but the corrosive residue is incompatible with metallic permanence."[18] The later writer is flawed by pride, a caring more for appearance, a distancing between chemist and plumber, while the former communicates, attempts to establish communion, and trusts that it can happen.

To attempt to communicate, especially to a hostile audience, promotes, because it requires it, the virtue of hope and

ambition. The etymology of the word ambition is the latin word "ambire" which meant to go about gathering votes for public office. It does little good to play Achilles, pride swollen, avoiding compromise and empathy lest one becomes like "one of t.em". To change things one must be willing to engage others in some sort of dialogue with the hope that communion can occur and with enough ambition to carry it out. I might add that I am not assuming that compromise or the middle ground is the model for establishing communion--such posturing is often the position of the intellectually dishonest or those who are unprepared for the competing pull of various virtues. One must, in other words, temper one's hope with humility.

Disposition

My final concern is with the application of the canon to the Disposition stage--the actual writing or speaking and all the revising and editing that is attendant to this stage. Invention and creation of one's audience occurs not only prior to writing, but in the act of writing. I would remind again that my organizing this paper into three parts--invention, audience, and disposition--does not assume that the process of writing occurs in stages or that writing as a heuristic comes after some non-writing invention or heuristic strategy. Furthermore, I am inclined to view the act of writing as the most critical stage in the making of meaning. We push the pen and the pen pushes us. As we write, we see, literally, what we mean, and it is in this technology of writing that we establish meaning. Nevertheless, the examples I have used in the first two parts of this paper

point to different activities in the act of being a writer (distinct from "writing") that promote the virtues of the writer's canon.

Honesty

Since language is a way of seeing, it is also a way of not seeing. To write is to give significance to something. The honest writer knows what language does to reality--language is a way of seeing reality and a way of not seeing. I am making a distinction between the honesty of an invention that is required as a writer inquires and questions and investigates prior to writing (or after writing), and the honesty required of writing itself. As I write, for example, I need to worry about the reality I am creating. A writer can literally get caught up in her words (paradoxically, this is what makes writing exciting--I think of Robert Frost's "no surprise for the poet, no surprise for the reader"). Writing is full of surprises and it is this aspect that requires a writer to be on her toes, her honest toes (even this strained image is one that comes from the preceding word "toes", but I decided to keep it). The fact that I have at times referred to the artificiality of this article's informing structure is an attempt at honesty--a recognition that being enamored of one's words or structures can surprise, delight, entertain, but also lead astray--particularly the writer.

Besides the epistomological issue of the relationship between writing as a way of knowing, as a way of making meaning, I would also include under disposition and honesty those pedagogical strategies that employ formalized techniques, for

example, the 500 word theme often coupled with stock rhetorical modes of development, that may serve useful purposes, but may not, if character growth is a primary objective, serve the development of the vir bonum. David Harrington, in an essay entitled "Teaching Ethical Writing", writes: "It doesn't take much illustrative material to give the appearance of support for a generalization. The academic opportunist soon learns this and that presents a very troublesome ethical problem."[19] It is quite possible that setting up templates for composition, though supportive for other legitimate goals of a writing teacher, encourages a lackadaisical attitude towards the implications regarding form and meaning--implications that result in a view that form and meaning are separable, that words and structures are mere clothing for our ideas, and thus the promoting of a situation that does not encourage the virtue of honesty.

S.M. Halloran supports the view I am giving here about the relationship between writing and meaning and its relationship to character. "Character is always corrigible because it resides in habits that are formed by the very actions in which they are expressed. I choose my character, but not my personality."[20] The honest writer recognizes how writing is to choose one's character by making his character as they write. We become what we want to become and if for the writing teacher the goal is the vir bonum then the teacher needs to control for this outcome.

There certainly are things to be avoided if one is controlling for this outcome, but there are also strategies that help promote this kind of dispositional making of character. If

writing is a way of creating self or character then we want to avoid those strategies that create a less than ethical character, and to promote those strategies that are helpful. It is not the purpose of this essay to go into the informing thinking that influences my thinking (Richard Lanham, Wayne Booth, Walker Gibson) about writing as the creating of self, a way of becoming, but it does suit my purposes to suggest that much of the pedagogy regarding imitating and impersonating is not only supportive of the goals of creating an ethical character, but hark back to the Classical tradition that informs this essay. It was precisely the methods of copying, imitating, and impersonating that the Romans used in educating their young. An authentic self or the preferred, honest self, was created, if you will, by trying "on" alot of selves. Even here, however, it is critical that the teacher be prepared to meet the concerns of those students who find imitation dishonest, as well as being sensitive to ways in which this pedagogy may promote dishonesty.

Courage

Under invention I wrote of the need to confront the ethical implications of exploring and entertaining conceptions of the world that threatened the stability of our students' images of the world. Under my concern with audience I addressed the primary involvement of the virtue of courage with attempts at establishing communion with others. In this final concern with courage in the "dispositional" sense, I will address the issue of style and impression management--words not only create the writer's self, they also establish a self, an ethos, that always, to some

extent, attempts to impress. But how far should a writer go in meeting the expectations of others? We are an intolerant society in many ways. As much as many of us say and act as if we are offended by commercials that promote "dressing for success", there is ample evidence that one can dress for success. Even in our own profession there is a ambiguity about style and impression management. Rosemary Hake and Joseph M. Williams' article in College English, entitled "Style and its Consequences: Do as I Do, Not as I Say", shows the results of a study of English teachers and their teaching of style and the pedagogical implications. The study showed that English teachers valued highly "nominative" language (when accompanied by evidence of reasoned thinking) over supposedly good style (also accompanied by evidence of reasoned thinking), that is, a style not overly nominative.[21] This study strongly suggests for the context of this paper, that even English teachers are impressed by supposedly intended impression managing styles that are not exemplary. How plain should the "plain truth" be? How plain should a style be? How adoptive to the expectations of an audience should a writer or speaker be? This is a tough decision. This dispositional concern with courage is no more evident than in issues surrounding dialect. What impression does one make if he speaks in an authentic voice that may be viewed as the expression of a substandard dialect (Richard Ohmann and others have written persuasively on class and language as a marker and maker of class)? As teachers we need to worry about the implications of a pedagogy that may foster a standard of

language "that would freeze students' language into someone else's rules imposed from without."[22] Such a pedagogy may run counter to the good advice that our students have the courage to be themselves.

But what is the self? Is not the self shaped by the need to create and present a self to an audience? Would it not also take courage to present a self that to some extent may even run counter to the image a writer has of herself? It would be unethical I would argue for a person of substance, who has followed the imperatives of inquiry and therefore has something of value to say, to not succeed because of a failure to impress, because of a failure, for at least this occasion, to become a version of self that impresses--especially if this version requires little more than attending to "someone elses rules". But of course it seems equally unethical to pound away at our students about correctness if we are doing little more than promoting class, not clarity or logic as many claim. It will take courage, or this aspect of courage ought to be made manifest, to decide to "impress" or not.

Love

One can love truth, one can love one's audience, and, in order to maintain symmetry, one can love words, the right words. Much of what I said under invention and love applies here. It is through speaking and writing that we create self, and this desire to "say" requires self love. To speak and write is to first and foremost promote the notion that one is important, that one has something to say that is worth saying and worth listening to. I

would add only to this that to love words is, in a way, to love self, since it is language and the ability to name, to signify, and thus create significance, that one achieves his humanity. And to love words is to love others, since without words union, communion, is impossible, and the other person would surely be hell.

Humility

As I mentioned earlier in the text, words are no longer viewed within the ontological and epistomological framework of the Ancients. Furthermore, few of us believe or ought to believe (for nonbelievers I refer them to Susanne Langor and others) that language mirrors reality. Instead, one confronts the frightening epistomology of the 20th Century--that words construct and obstruct reality. In Stuart Chase's The Tyranny of Words he compares the limited language [sign] of his cat, Hobie Baker, with the language of humans [symbols] "...most children do not long maintain Hobie Baker's realistic appraisal of the environment. Verbal identification and confused abstractions begin at a tender age....Language is no more than crudely acquired before children begin to suffer from it, and to misrepresent the world by reason of it."[23] All can be viewed as a fiction. And if words become who and what we are, and if not everyone "speaks" the same language metaphorically and literally, then alienation and loneliness seem all too possible and real. I don't think as teachers we can or should prevent our students from sensing the ragged edges of truth here.

Hope

I am going to conclude this essay within the framework of this essay's structure. I believe, as I mentioned in my introduction, that Otis Walter is right in calling our attention to studying the role of hope in studying discourse, and concluding with hope is one way of calling attention to this. "One can with Whorf and others, emphasize the extent to which the language by its very structure of categories limits the thinker, or one can recall [Franc] Boas's [the anthropologist] pointing out that any language is capable of generating the terms to cover new ideas, when that need occurs."[24]

However humbled by attempts at establishing communion, we nevertheless continue to speak and write; and we ask our students to. Nor could we stop them. Perhaps they will never encounter or sense the loneliness of language (though this humbling aspect should be taught and learned) and thus may not be searching for hope. It may be difficult to get our students to strive for something they may not yet need or to get those who need hope to strive for it. In any case, it is possible not to get "caught up" in our words or those of others. It is possible with language to maintain a critical distance--to distinguish between the "knowing" that goes with language and the "truth" to which all knowing aims.

We can, if we listen and read with care, understand others, and, if we speak and write with care, get others to understand us. It is hope, to what ever degree some of us have to call forth this virtue and thus promote it, that envelopes these attempts at careful communion. It is not without significance that the most obvious characteristic of despair is silence.

Endnotes

[1]S. Michael Halloran, "Aristotle's Concept of Ethos, or if not His Somebody Else's," Rhetoric Review, Vol. I, No. 1, Sept. 1982,p. 61.

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[4]Walter Kaufman, Beyond Guilt and Justice: From Decidophobia to Autonomy (New York: Peter H. Wyden, Inc./Publisher, 1973).

[5]Otis M. Walter, "The Classics in Rhetoric," College Composition and Communication, Vol. XXXII, Dec. 1981, p. 421.

[6]Kaufmann, p. 178

[7]Augustus M. Kolich, "Plagiarism: The Worm of Reason," College English, Vol. 45, Number 2, Feb. 1983, pp. 141-148.

[8]Jack P. Rawlins, "What's So Wrong With 'In My Opinion'?," College English, Vol. 41, No. 6, Feb. 1980, pp. 670-674.

[9]James C. Raymond, "Rhetoric: The Methodology of the Humanities," College English, Vol. 44, No. 8, Dec. 1982, pp. 778-783.

[10]Edward P.J. Corbett, "A Comparison of John Locke and John Henry Newman on the Rhetoric of Assent," Rhetoric Review, Vol. 1, No. 1, Sept. 1982, pp. 40-49.

[11]Allan Bloom, "Our Listless Universities," National Review, Vol. 34, Dec. 10, 1982, p. 1537.

[12]Helen Keller, The Story of My Life (1936: 1sted. 1902), pp. 23-24.

[13]Donald Murray, "Teaching the Other Self: The Writer's First Reader," College Composition and Communication, Vol. XXXIII, May 1982, p. 142.

[14]Kaufmann, p. 177.

[15]Margaret B. McDowell, "Honesty in Freshman Rhetoric," College English, Vol. 32, No. 6, March 1971, p. 673.

[16]George Lakoff, Mark Johnson, Metaphors We Live By (University of Chicago, 1980), p. 8.

[17]Richard McKeon (ed.), Basic Works of Aristotle. (New York: Random House, 1941), p. 963.

[18]Richard E. Young, Alton L. Becker, Kenneth L. Pike, Rhetoric: Discovery and Change (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1970), p. 183.

[19]David V. Harrington, "Teaching Ethical Writing," Freshman English News, Fall, 1981, p. 15.

[20]Halloran, p. 61.

[21]Rosemary Hake, Joseph M. Williams, "Style and its Consequences: Do as I Do, Not as I Say," College English, Vol. 43, No. 5, Sept. 1981, p. 432.

[22]Richard Ohmann, "Reflections on Class and Language," College English, Vol. 44, No. 1, Jan. 1982, pp. 1-17.

[23]Langor, pp. 40-41.

[24]Louise M. Rosenblatt, Th Reader, the Text, the Poem (Southern Illinois University, 1978) p. 168.